

From: Dan Herman
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft and the OpenGL patents

Any question whether Microsoft now finally plans to play well with others? They just purchased from SGI the patents to OpenGL. Make that ClosedGL.

Can you explain why Microsoft would want to own, as opposed to license, those patents? If you can't, then you haven't been paying attention for the last 10 years.

Perhaps it's to leverage their competitors out of the graphics industry by obstructing OpenGL progress and thereby advancing the cause of their own closed-solution, incompatible Direct3D? OpenGL is already struggling to stay current in the face of D3D's standards-excluding march across the application developer landscape.

If Microsoft is successful in bringing on the collapse of OpenGL, I'd find it very difficult to imagine that Apple or Linux could survive (unless they licensed D3D). The lack of a D3D engine for the PlayStation or Nintendo's Game Cube means that ultimately these companies would follow Apple's & Linux's demise or they would be forced to license D3D from Microsoft. All of those alternatives are very bleak pictures. As a Microsoft developer for 15+ years, I'm quite sure that's precisely what Bill has in mind.

Please, someone, make this nightmare end!

Dan Herman
DigitalFish Films
<http://www.digitalfish.com>